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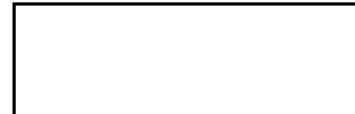
5 January 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: An Appraisal of Soviet Intentions

1. We are transmitting a summary of the memorandum "An Appraisal of Soviet Intentions." We enclose also your copy of the original memorandum, to which you may wish to refer in your discussions with the President.

2. We note that, in paragraph 17, where it is stated that the Soviets "are exerting major efforts to develop and deploy an effective anti-ballistic missile system," you have put a question mark on "develop". We therefore also attach, for your information, our current views on the status of the Soviet AICBM program, taken from the draft of the USIB "Memorandum to Holders of NIE 11-4-60," currently in the process of coordination.



ABBOT SMITH
Acting Chairman
Board of National Estimates

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*Summary requested
by [signature]*

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5 January 1961

SUMMARY OF AN APPRAISAL OF SOVIET INTENTIONS

1. Foreign Policy. The general policy line of "peaceful coexistence" which Khrushchev has been pursuing for over five years, was vigorously reaffirmed at the XXII Party Congress. It remains a most aggressive political strategy. It seeks to turn to Communist advantage all the great strains of the varied and frequently discordant non-Communist world: national rivalry, colonialism, desires for economic development and peace. It allows room for tactics of detente and conciliation, but it also provides for the vigorous exploitation of any sort of vulnerability in the external world, be it Berlin's geographical isolation, Europe's fears of nuclear devastation, the instability of royal government in Iran, or the inchoate disunity of Laos.

2. Military Policy. At the same time, this policy also acknowledges that general nuclear war would bring intolerable damage upon the USSR itself and should therefore be avoided. The Soviets believe that their armed power is already formidable enough to deter the West, in most instances, from resorting to general war in response to Communist advances by lesser means. In further developing their forces, they are probably seeking an offensive capability large enough to bring under attack a large segment of Western striking power and national strength. Defensively, they are improving their conventional air defenses and making major efforts in the field of anti-ballistic missile systems. At the same time, they clearly intend to retain large and modernized ground and naval forces.

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3. All these programs aim at a combination of forces which would permit the USSR to make a preemptive attack on the US, should it conclude that a US attack was imminent, and to prosecute general war effectively if deterrence should fail. But these programs, and general Soviet thinking as well, do not reflect a belief that it is possible to achieve a decisive advantage over the West, one which would permit them to launch general war with confidence.

4. Domestic Affairs. Inner Communist politics was the main business of the XXII Congress. Domestically, Khrushchev emerged in a strong position, but his programs still remain subject to some sort of consensus among the top leaders, and there is evidence that some aspects of these programs are meeting effective opposition. The renewed attacks on Stalin, used by Khrushchev to make a case against his opponents in the CPSU and other Communist parties, have resulted in widespread confusion among Communists. This phenomenon is probably temporary; in the long run, however, the anti-Stalin campaign is likely gradually to weaken the propositions on which Soviet party rule is based.

5. Bloc Relations. More important, Khrushchev used the Albanian issue to demand once again that Peiping acknowledge Soviet leadership of the Communist movement. China, rejecting this demand, continues to criticize Soviet policy, to uphold Albania, and to maneuver for support among other parties. As a result, the chances of a full break in party relations, involving open polemics and bitter competition, have in our view increased very substantially -- perhaps the odds are now about even. Should such a break occur, it would have a profound effect on Soviet views and prospects abroad; conceivably it might lead, in the long run, to more normal relations with the West.

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Summary of AN APPRAISAL OF SOVIET INTENTIONS

1. Foreign Policy. Nothing in the XXII Congress at Moscow last October, or in Soviet behavior since, suggests any change in the broad lines of the USSR's foreign policy. Khrushchev has reaffirmed, and is vigorously pursuing, the strategy of "peaceful coexistence" aimed at defeating the West without war. As part and parcel of this policy, he is continuing to build Soviet military strength in order to increase the USSR's political weight in the world and to prosecute general war as effectively as possible should deterrence fail.
2. Domestic Affairs. The Congress revealed, however, that domestic Soviet politics is a lively and contentious business. Khrushchev does not, we believe, have to fear for his position. But he does have to maneuver among colleagues who are less than equal to him but more than the terrorized lackeys who surrounded Stalin. These colleagues share Khrushchev's general outlook, but they have succeeded in limiting the revisions which he wished to make in economic priorities (greater benefits for the consumer) and military policy (downgrading of conventional forces and traditional doctrine).
3. In attacking Stalin, Khrushchev was seeking to discredit all views other than his own, not only among his colleagues, but also in the party

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apparatus at large. The hierarchy of professional party workers is of a conservative cast and tends to be suspicious of Khrushchev's innovations. The anti-Stalin campaign was meant to break their emotional attachment to their old mentor, while the concurrent attack on Molotov et al was intended to warn them of the penalties of failing to adjust to the Khrushchev era.

4. The confusion created by this maneuver among Communists, both in the USSR and abroad, is probably temporary. In the long run, however, the anti-Stalin campaign is likely gradually to weaken the propositions on which Soviet party rule is based.

5. Bloc Relations. Of much more immediate interest and import is the renewed Soviet attack, primarily via Albania, on Chinese pretensions to international leadership. Peiping has once again rejected the demand that it acknowledge Soviet authority; it continues to uphold Albania, to lobby openly against Soviet positions in international front gatherings, and to maneuver for support among other parties. Neither side evinces a willingness to compromise, and each appears prepared to contemplate an open split.

6. In following the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, we have generally felt it unlikely that matters would proceed to the point of a public disavowal of the myth of unity. Such a break would almost inevitably be followed by open recriminations, dual claims to the possession of doctrinal truth, and calls for the overthrow of the competing leadership. Communists everywhere would be pressed to declare themselves; purges and splits would

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